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USDA Keeps Watchful Eye on National Bird at NAS JRB

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THE Currents™

Vol. 27 No. 6

Serving the New Orleans Regional Military/DoD Communities

June 2016

NOSC New Orleans Holds Change of Command

By Mass Communication Specialist
 2nd Class Edward Guttierrez III
The Currents' Staff

Cmdr. Joseph Kovacocy relived Cmdr. Charles Wheeler as commanding officer of Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) New Orleans during a change of command ceremony aboard Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans May 14.

"I look forward to serving with the Sailors of NOSC New Orleans," said Kovacocy. "Most importantly, I look forward to serving you," he told the audience.

A naval aviator, Kovacocy has accumulated in excess of 3,000 hours as pilot of the P-3C Orion aircraft. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, five Navy Commendation Medals, three Navy Achievement Medals and one Battle Efficiency Award.

During his remarks, Wheeler spoke about the accomplishments of NOSC New Orleans Sailors during his tenure as commanding



Cmdr. Joseph Kovacocy, commanding officer of Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) New Orleans, receives his command ashore pin from his wife Karie at the conclusion of a change of command ceremony May 14.

Photo by MC2 Edward Guttierrez

officer.

"Although today's ceremony focuses on the commanding officer, he is absolutely nothing without the team with whom he has served and shared in success," said Wheeler. "Let me tell you that in no uncertain terms, the incredible success that NOSC New Orleans has achieved throughout the last two years is the direct result of the immeasurable efforts

of this tremendous team of active-duty, full-time support and reserve Sailors."

During Wheeler's time as commanding officer, NOSC New Orleans received awards such as the 2015 Reserve Component Personnel Programs Excellence Award and a Blue-H Navy Surgeon General's Health Promotion and Wellness Award. His next assignment will be serving as the chief staff officer

for Navy Region Southeast Reserve Component Command Fort Worth, at NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas.

"A little more than two years ago, I gave a short speech where I mentioned how fortunate I was to be assuming command of such an incredible group of professionals," said Wheeler. "I can tell you two years later that I have so much more to be grateful for."

River Rattlers Join Forces With Habitat for Humanity

By Strike Fighter Squadron
 (VFA) 204
Public Affairs

Sailors assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 204 aboard Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans, joined local Habitat for Humanity teams in the construction of three homes in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward April 29th.

This has become an annual event for the River Rattlers who took an operational pause in their local flight

schedule to offer 65 Sailors the opportunity to volunteer.

"You can't go 10 feet in uniform without a member of the local community thanking you for your service," said Cmdr. Rigel Pirrone, VFA-204 commanding officer. "These types of events are a chance for us to show our appreciation of that support and contribute to the ongoing post-Katrina rebuilding effort."

Aviation Structural Mechanic (Safety Equipment) 2nd Class Jessica Tucker is the VFA-204 volunteer coordinator.

River Rattlers, Page 10



Sailors assigned to VFA-204 work on a home in New Orleans April 29 as part of a rebuilding project for Habitat for Humanity. Sixty-five Sailors took the day off from their normal duties of flying and maintaining jets to work on three houses in the Ninth Ward.

Photo by AME2 Jessica Tucker



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By Capt. Mark Sucato
NAS JRB Commanding Officer

In the summertime – traditionally from Memorial Day through Labor Day – as temperatures rise so do our levels and varieties of activity. With this upsurge comes an inherent rise in risk level – but this does not mean we cannot enjoy all that the season offers. It simply means we must pause and assess any additional hazards associated with our chosen pastime.

Whatever your activity, especially if it involves exercise outside in any form (running, lawn mowing), increasing your fluid level intake is likely one of the easier mitigation tactics you and your family can take to match the summer heat. Drink plenty of water!

There is also an increase in water activities this time of the year, whether boating, skiing, fishing or taking a dip in the pool. Our children are most vulnerable to any threats posed by these activities, although none of us are immune. And as most of you know, the Navy has recently taken positive steps towards assuring our children are safe in and around the pool, implementing the SPLASH Program, a drowning prevention campaign that targets children. A U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's report shows that drowning is the leading cause of death among children 1 to 4 years of age and it is the second leading cause of death for children from 5 to 14 years old.

The U. S. Coast Guard cites that on average 700 recreational boaters die on American waterways every year and 7,000 more are injured annually. Nearly all could be prevented with a few simple steps on the part of boat owners and operators. Yet, research sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety confirmed a strong suspicion: Most boaters believe they are safe enough already. They equate boating safety with equipment like life jackets, fire extinguishers, and radios, and forget that safety really is a matter of personal behavior.

The Coast Guard strongly recommends boat



operators get a bow-to-stern inspection of a boat's condition and safety equipment annually. They also suggest you take a boating course – you can even do it online! The course can be found here: <http://www.americasboating-course.com>. And, wear your life jacket. Nothing would reduce boating fatalities more than universal life-jacket wear. Most boaters carry life jackets, but few wear them consistently while underway, despite the fact drowning causes most boating deaths. And, never operate a boat under the influence of alcohol.

Motorcycle riding is a favorite hobby during this season. Remember that motorists often have trouble seeing motorcycles and reacting in time so be visible. The only thing between you and the road is your protective gear. Use it! Know your bike and how to use it: get formal training and take refresher courses. Develop your riding techniques before going into heavy traffic. Know how to handle your bike in conditions such as wet or sandy roads, high winds, and uneven surfaces.

Always, I strongly recommend we all closely monitor our alcohol consumption – whatever we are doing. Alcohol not only impairs our judgment but also dehydrates the body, which is the last thing we need this time of the year.

The return of warmer temperatures brings thoughts of relaxation, exploration, and being closer to nature. Whether you're relaxing in the backyard, weeding your garden or enjoying the pool take a little time to keep you and your family safe this summer.

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The next issue of The Currents will be published on Wednesday, June 1, 2016. Questions concerning content for publication are heartily encouraged and must be received at the Public Affairs Office, Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB), 400 Russell Ave., New Orleans, LA, 70143-5012, phone (504) 678-3260, by close of business on Friday, May 20, 2016.

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Naval Air Station JRB New Orleans

Capt. Mark Sucato

Commanding Officer



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NAS JRB Holds National Day of Prayer Breakfast

By Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Edward Guttierrez III
The Currents' Staff

Service members from various tenant commands aboard Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans joined together with civilians in commemoration of the National Day of Prayer May 5.

Designated by Congress in 1952 to be held on the first Thursday of May, the National Day of Prayer is an annual ob-

servance where people are asked "to turn to God in prayer and meditation." Each year since its inception, the president has signed a proclamation, encouraging all Americans to pray on this day.

Attendees gathered together in the Redfish Rocks galley to eat breakfast, listen to remarks given by base chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Turpin and Maj. Greg Broderick, chaplain of the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, as well as to join together in prayer.



Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Turpin, NAS JRB New Orleans chaplain, delivers opening remarks to attendees at a breakfast in commemoration of the National Day of Prayer. The National Day of is an annual day of observance held on the first Thursday of May, designated by the United States Congress, when people are asked "to turn to God in prayer and meditation".

*Photo by MC2
Edward Guttierrez*

Summer is Here: Base Pool Implements SPLASH Program

The Currents' Staff

On May 1, the Navy implemented a program known as Splash to promote water safety and drowning prevention.

The program requires all youth, 17 years or younger, to take a test in order to use areas designated for swimmers, water slides and diving boards. Youth that pass the test will be issued a license. Swimmers will be required to bring the license each time they visit the pool and will receive a new wristband each day. Non-swimmers, 17 years of age and younger, must have active supervision,

which means an adult must be in the water and within one arm's length (max two non-swimmers per adult).

The swimming test has four parts. Swimmers must: jump into the deep end of the swimming pool and return to the surface; tread water for 60 seconds keeping their head and shoulders above the surface; swim 25 yards using a recognizable stroke; and be able to exit the pool unassisted.

In accordance with current policy, non-swimmers are encouraged to wear a personal flotation device (PFD). Individuals are responsible for having their own PFD which must be U.S. Coast

Guard approved to be used in a pool.

Non-swimmers, 17 years of age or younger, will not be allowed in any "swimmer's zone" or additional recreational amenities (pool, slides, climbing walls, diving boards etc.) with or without a PFD.

Parents are encouraged to sign their children up for swim classes scheduled for June 14-24 and July 12-22.

Renovations are underway for parts of the pool area and the bathhouse and are expected to be complete not later than July 22. During the renovation the water park and wading pool will not be open. Patrons will enter the pool using the

gate located on Yorktown Avenue which is closed to vehicle traffic by the pool to allow for the placement of temporary restroom and shower facilities. It will reopen once construction is complete.

During construction there will not be any concession sales. Patrons are encouraged to bring light snacks, such as small bags of chips, candy bars, etc. Up to a soft pack or six-pack cooler of water will be allowed. Large, rigid ice chests will not be allowed on the pool deck.

For more information and to sign up for swim classes call the base fitness center at 504-678-3230.



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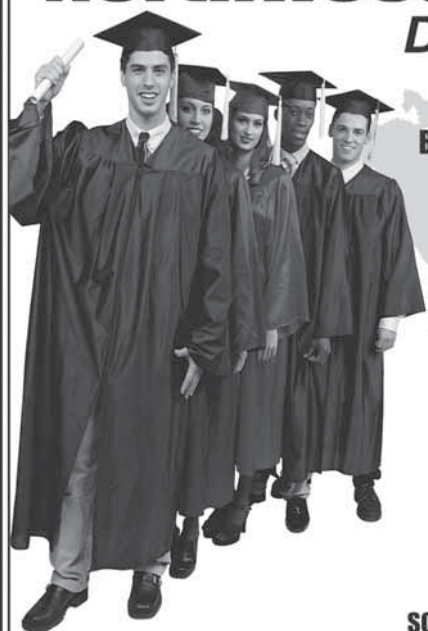


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The Navy Exchange at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans is hosting an educational event featuring history reenactors and static displays from the World War II era. The event will be June 10 and 11 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. in front of the NEX. For more information call the NEX at 504-678-2717.

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Therapy Dog Sniffs Out Stress

By Mass Communication
Specialist 1st Class
John Hulle
The Currents' Staff

Most people who have been around the military have seen a military working dog (MWD). These hard working canines are most often associated with finding explosives or drugs, often in austere and dangerous locations.

Patients and staff at Naval Branch Health Clinic (NBHC) Belle Chasse had a special visit from a different kind of MWD May 4. Cmdr. Joe, with his handler a short distance behind, visited the clinic on Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans to sniff out other potential problems.

Cmdr. Joe is a therapy dog. Therapy dogs are trained to provide affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, schools, hospices and disaster areas. Besides providing usual therapy support, Cmdr. Joe can also smell excessive levels of stress in patients.

"He's an awesome dog," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tracy Krauss, a behavioral health nurse at Belvoir Community Hospital, in Fort Belvoir, Va., and Cmdr. Joe's handler. According to Krauss, Cmdr. Joe is able to smell the stress hormone cortisol. To date, he has identified 59 people showing signs of emotional distress. Of those, nine people admitted to having a suicide plan and mental health workers are ac-

tively engaging 33 of the others. When Cmdr. Joe senses someone is suffering from stress or depression, he is able to give his handler a cue.

"People generally like dogs, they want to hug him. He's like a big teddy bear. He's also mindful of people that may be afraid of dogs. With kids he will often lower himself down to their feet," said Krauss. "He's sat with enlisted all the way to line officers."

The duo travels to military and civilian hospitals throughout the country to demonstrate Cmdr. Joe's unique talent. They visited Naval Hospital Pensacola at NAS Pensacola, Fla., and several branch clinics in the Gulf Coast region May 2 - 6.

During their visit, Cmdr.



Lt. Cmdr. Tracey Kraus and Cmdr. Joe visit patients at NBHC Clinic Belle Chasse at NAS JRB New Orleans May 4. Cmdr. Joe is a therapy dog trained to identify stress and depression in people.

Photo by MC1 John Hulle

Joe and Kraus sat in with a group therapy session and made their rounds around the clinic to say hello to patients and staff alike. Krauss has

been Cmdr. Joe's handler for four years. "It's an awesome opportunity," she said. "People are always happy to see him."

Front Gate Construction Underway

By Mass Communication
Specialist 1st Class
John Hulle
The Currents' Staff

Residents, personnel and visitors at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans can expect some changes to the front gate in the near future.

"Construction on Russell Avenue from Louisiana Highway 23 to the canopy and entry control point, which is set to begin

in early June, will bring facilities up to current code and evolving anti-terrorism force protection (ATFP) requirements," said Troy Thompson, facility management director with Naval Facility Engineering Command Southeast.

"As the main gate is the face of the station to the surrounding community, architectural appealing enhancements will be added to demonstrate the pride of the military," he said.

During construction, the gate will remain open with tempo-

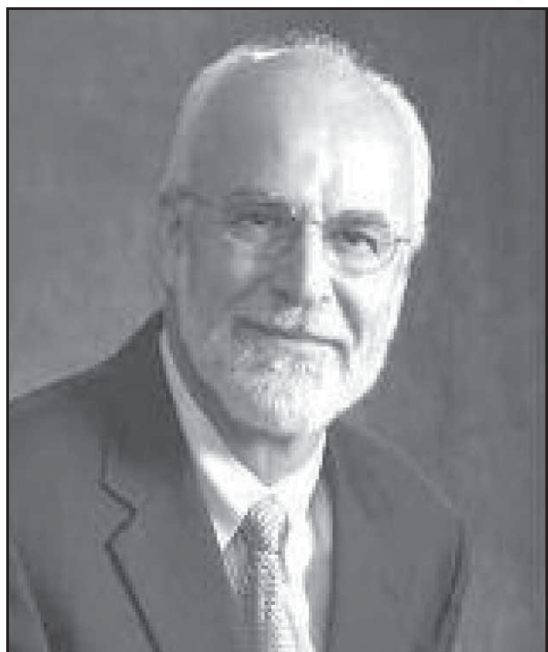
rary travel patterns. Thompson said the construction is expected to be complete later this year.

Besides looking nicer and increasing security functions, the new entrance will increase the operational tempo for the guards and increase ATFP measures. Ultimately, the front gate is designed to provide faster and safer entry on base for authorized personnel.

Renovations will also include increased lighting and a larger canopy.



Pictured is an architectural rendering of the changes to the front gate at NAS JRB New Orleans. Construction is scheduled to be completed in the fall of this year.



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USDA Keeps Watchful Eye on National Bird at NAS JRB

National Birds Nesting Aboard NAS JRB

By Mass Communication
Specialist 2nd Class
Edward Gutierrez
The Currents' Staff

South Louisiana is home to a vast array of wildlife, both common species and some that are a bit rare. Containing nearly 50 percent of the wetlands in the continental United States, Louisiana's swamps, bayous, coastal marshes and barrier islands are home to a diverse array of animals such as alligators, nutria and alligator snapping turtles. Often, living in such close proximity to these areas brings these creatures into our backyards, sometimes literally. Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans is no exception.

Due to NAS JRB New Orleans' location along the Mississippi River, the base plays host to its own assortment of local critters. Alligators, armadillos, and feral hogs are all relatively common, if annoying, residents. However, one animal people may not expect to live in South Louisiana is the American bald eagle.

Benjamin Buckley is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) representative aboard NAS JRB New Orleans. A trained wildlife biologist, Buckley manages both protected wildlife and nuisance animals in the area of the airfield.

"I love the variety," said Buckley. "I never know on a day-to-day basis whether there's going to be a snake in one of the hangars or an opossum somewhere or a bald eagle on the ground that I'll get to go catch."

Buckley first alerted the USDA to a mating pair of bald eagles aboard NAS JRB New Orleans in 2014. This pair of birds has successfully raised, or fledged, a pair of hatchlings each year.

While bald eagles may not

be the first creatures people think of when thinking about animal life in Louisiana, the national bird actually has a relatively significant presence in this region. The birds have recently made nests at Joe Bartholomew Golf Course in the Pontchartrain Park neighborhood of New Orleans and another group has established a nest for the past few years in Algiers. In fact, a recent survey by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries found 356 active eagles nests in Louisiana. Only Florida hosts more eagle nests annually. Louisiana was home to only four pairs of eagles in 1960 and five in 1973.

According to Brian Washburn, a research biologist with USDA - APHIS, Louisiana is a particularly fertile habitat for bald eagles.

"Louisiana in particular, along with some of the other coastal areas, is such a tremendous food resource," said Washburn. "Eagles eat a lot of fish and they scavenge a lot, so in a wetland habitat there's lots of opportunities to find food without having to work too hard for it. This allows them more time to raise their young as opposed to having to spend more time hunting and looking for food."

Washburn visited NAS JRB New Orleans May 13-17 as part of a nationwide research study to how bald eagles that live in the immediate vicinity of U.S. airports and military air installations move in the airspace.

Washburn's study focuses on the way the exponential growth of bald eagle populations across the country have affected military and civil air operations.

"I looked at the Navy's and Air Force's and civil data from 1990 to 2013 and found eagle strikes (in-flight collisions with aircraft) on aircraft increased 2,200 percent," said Washburn. "This increase in eagle strikes tracks along with bald eagle population



Benjamin Buckley, a wildlife biologist with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Brian Washburn, also with USDA - APHIS, test a catapult trap for use in trapping bald eagles.

growth."

The main goal of the study is to understand how the eagles move around the bases and the risk to both themselves and air operations. A second objective is to come up with new ways to manage eagle populations near military or civil airports that corresponds with the protections in place for the national bird.

"We are going to attempt to band these eagles with a satellite transmitter that is programmed to collect location data," said Washburn.

"This data will be collected every hour for 19 hours a day. That data will include latitude, longitude, altitude and flight speed. Technology is giving us ways to learn things about these birds that we haven't been able to learn before. Usually, we'd be able to get data that would give us a location, but not necessarily altitude. This information gives us the ability to learn in three dimensions how these birds interact with their environments and whether they are posing any danger to air traffic."



Brian Washburn, a research biologist with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), prepares a catapult trap for use in trapping bald eagles at NAS JRB New Orleans.

Photos by MC2 Edward Gutierrez

By Mass Communication
Specialist 1st Class
John Hulle
The Currents' Staff

A bald eagle recovered from Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans was released May 9 at the Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center in Algiers, La.

Benjamin Buckley, a wildlife biologist for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), works on the base to protect animal health and welfare. He also manages invasive pests aboard the installation.

Buckley said he discovered the emaciated fledgling eagle Apr. 19. "The eagle looked to be a few months old and probably just wasn't quite strong enough to fly yet," he said.

The fledgling was the offspring of a mating pair of eagles on base that biologists have been monitoring for the past few years. Buckley said each year the couple has successfully fledged two eaglets.

After taking a few photos and sharing them with a bird expert at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, they decided that the eagle needed help.

With the assistance from fellow USDA-APHIS employee, Lucas Bridges, Buckley was able to capture the bird. He then took it to the Audubon Zoo, which transferred it to at Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine in Baton Rouge, La.

With the bird nursed to full strength, Buckley now just needed to release it back to nature. Again the Audubon Nature Institute was there to help by offering their Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center.

The survival center sits on more than 1,000 acres of U.S. Coast Guard and New Orleans land along the westbank of the Mississippi River.

"Audubon Nature Institute is not only dedicated to the ani-



Richard Dunn, assistant curator of Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, holds a rescued bald eagle. The eagle was found emaciated aboard NAS JRB New Orleans. With the help of members from the United States Department of Agriculture, Audubon Nature Institute, and Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine the bird was nursed by to health and released.

mals under our care, but also to the ones in our backyard," said Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center Curator Michelle Hatwood. "Local wildlife is vital for a healthy ecosystem and we were very excited to take part in releasing one of the nation's most symbolic species. I am happy to see bald eagles thriving in their natural habitats."

After several weeks, and with the assistance of several agencies, Buckley was able to release the eagle. He smiled as the bird took flight and soared to perch on a tall tree several hundred feet away.

"I think he will be fine. Where we released him is a perfect spot right by water," said Buckley. "I was very excited."



Ben Buckley, a wildlife biologist for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) stationed at NAS JRB New Orleans, is all smiles after the eagle returns to nature.



Members from the Audubon Nature Institute and USDA-APHIS transport a bald eagle at the Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center in Algiers, La.

Photos by MC1 John Hulle



Benjamin Buckley and Richard Dunn release a bald eagle. It quickly took flight and perched on a tree several hundred yards away.



Free at last! Experts expect the bird to make a full recovery and thrive at its new home next to the Mississippi River.



Volunteers and staff from the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans attend a luncheon in their honor for the work they provide in support of Sailors, Marines and their families throughout the year. This year's group included, from left: Joseph Sheppard, Colette Paulino, Rhonda Humphrey, Mary Fisher, Amy Eberle, Amanda Szampruch and Alice Huffman. The luncheon, held in late March, is one of two held each year for volunteers.

The NMCRS, or the Society, provides financial assistance and education, as well as other programs and services, to members of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, their eligible family members, widows, and survivors. The Society also receives and manages donated funds to administer these programs and services. For more information or to volunteer with NMCRS call 504-678-4652.

Photo by Tammy Prine

Academy Blasts Off During Rocket Day

By Mass Communication Specialist
1st Class John Hulle
The Currents' Staff

Students from Belle Chasse Academy (BCA) flew sky high with the help of some model rockets May 18 at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans.

Launch day was the culmination of a week of lessons, inquiry and construction of various types of model rockets for the students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. This is the 12th year the school has launched rockets.

"It's all about the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)," said Margaret Parker, academic coach for science and social studies at BCA. "We really pursue it. We want boys and girls to have a hands-on approach to science. It lets them play with it and figure it out. Afterwards there is a discussion with the teacher so we can figure out the results. It makes kids excited about these programs."

The students were able to

build the rockets based on the required skill levels. The younger students built stomp and water rockets using air or water pressure to launch, while those in grade six through eight were able to build electronic ignition model rockets using all they were taught throughout their lessons on thrust, balance and aerodynamics.

"It took me awhile to make my rocket. I put a lot of effort into it. I wanted to make mine look like an eagle," said Peter Holland, a sixth grader at BCA. "It's awesome. I learned a lot about science. I liked seeing all the rockets launch and their parachutes."

Holland said he now has a better understanding of science after a week studying rockets. After seeing a few classmates' rockets crash into the ground, he also learned that science can be unpredictable and that he "doesn't want to be an astronaut," he laughed.

That's an important lesson, according to Parker. Students watched as some of their creations did not work the way they intended and some failed



Margaret Parker and her fifth and sixth grade students from Belle Chasse Academy launch rockets at NAS JRB New Orleans May 18. The students spent a week learning about rocketry and then built their own model rockets to allow a hands-on approach to science.

Photos by MC1 John Hulle

to work the first time they tried to launch them.

"It was nice when things didn't go as they expected. The kids got a chance to see how to troubleshoot and not get frus-

trated," said Parker. "We had to figure out all the variables and what went wrong because that is how science works. It doesn't always go as you expect."

However, with a bit of trial

and error, and a couple small rocket engine fires, rocket day finished off as a hit.

"They all flew and everyone was successful and the kids had a lot of fun," said Parker.

River Rattlers: *continued from Page 1*

dinator. "A champion of the community outreach mission, Petty Officer Tucker has organized numerous volunteer opportunities for Rattler Sailors," said Pirrone.

Some of the River Rattlers recent volunteer work has included building a children's

playground at the Belle Chasse YMCA, cleaning stables at the Belle Chasse Rescue Ranch for horses, supporting the New Orleans Rock "n" Roll marathon, and volunteering at the National World War II Museum's Road to Tokyo exhibit opening.

"Our Habitat for Humanity

Day was most definitely a success. We truly enjoy being able to take a day off from flight operations to get involved in the community; helping restore areas of New Orleans," Tucker said.

The River Rattlers of VFA-204 are grateful for the oppor-

tunity to work with the organizers of these various organizations, she added.

At the three locations both enlisted and officer helped other volunteers hang siding, paint and work on foundations.

"We really enjoyed it. It was good to help out in the com-

munity while also taking a day off from the normal things we do at the command," said Tucker.

"It was also fun to see the officers get their hands dirty with the enlisted guys," she laughed. "We were all on the same level."

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INTERMISSION

8th Game	"□" (Prog. B)	\$1000.00
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Military Awarded Mayor's Community Service Award

By Tammy Prine
The Currents' Staff

The New Orleans Mayor's Military Advisory Committee (MMAC), City Council and the National World War II Museum celebrated Armed Forces Day by recognizing local military members from every branch, for their community service to New Orleans May 21 in a ceremony at the museum. The guest speakers at the event were American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett and retired marine Maj. Gen. David Mize, president of the MMAC.

The military recipients of the New Orleans Community Service Award were:

Marine Corps Capt. Samuel Baumer; Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Luis Lebron; Coast Guard Chief Information Systems Technician Joshua Flesher; Navy Chief Religious Program Specialist Celeste Shield; Louisiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Joshua Mellinger; and Louisiana Air National Guard (LAANG) Senior Airman Nicholas Arce.

While serving as the 2015 Marine Forces Reserve volunteer program coordinator and volunteering with multiple

programs in the New Orleans area, Baumer helped to develop relationships with organizations across the New Orleans area to include Habitat for Humanity, Veteran's Affairs Homeless Shelter, Special Olympics, Navy Fleet Week and others. His work helped the Marine Support Facility volunteer program surpass previous years by completing 8,925 hours of community service at 210 separate projects with a total of 1,781 volunteers.

With almost 30 years of service Lebron's consistent volunteer efforts demonstrate a commitment to service. He has volunteered more than 115 hours with the local Habitat for Humanity as a core volunteer. In 2015 he was part of the effort helping to end chronic veteran homelessness in New Orleans. Lebron helps with coaching, mentorship and encouragement with the local youth and supports the 377th Theater Sustainment Command's Adopt-a-School program helping to nurture the intellectual, emotional and physical growth of children.

Flesher is a designated agency representative for C4IT telecommunications at Coast Guard Base New Or-

leans. He performed more than 180 hours of charitable work towards organizations such as the Animal Rescue of New Orleans (ARNO) and the New Orleans Women and Children's Shelter. Flesher organized more than 20 volunteers to spend the day at ARNO and makes frequent visits to ARNO. With just his family and friends he has contributed more than \$2,500 for the New Orleans Women and Children's Shelter.

As a member of the religious ministries team at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans, Shield has worked with multiple non-profit organizations including schools, hospitals, social service programs and more throughout the New Orleans area. Her work coordinating and soliciting volunteers resulted in hundreds of volunteer hours performed, raising more than \$65,000 and the distribution of more than 8,000 pounds of food and 500 care packages for the underprivileged and homeless.

Mellinger volunteers his time with multiple organizations in the New Orleans area. With Kids Hope USA he spends time reading, talking,



Capt. Samuel Baumer



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Luis Lebron



ITC Joshua Flesher



RPC Celeste Shield



Staff Sgt. Joshua Mellinger



Senior Airman Nicholas Arce

playing and listening to a child at school. The young boys that he has mentored have had improvement on grades, shown a positive change in behavior and have healthier relationships with their friends and family. He also volunteers for Independent Living of New Orleans, a program for struggling young adults.

Arce spends time helping and serving others throughout the Jefferson Parish commu-

nity. He is an active volunteer coach for the parish recreation department coaching little league baseball. His dedication to the youth requires countless hours both on the field and off. He is also a volunteer at Wynhoven Healthcare Center helping with various needs of the elderly including serving food, assisting the elderly in daily walks and games and necessary paperwork.

Crescent City Physicians is pleased to welcome **Susan R. Hemelt, M.D.** Gynecology



After 23 years of OB/GYN service on the Westbank, **Dr. Susan Hemelt** left her practice three years ago to work with the United States Army in Heidelberg, Germany. She is now back in practice with Crescent City Physicians and providing gynecologic care at their Westbank office.

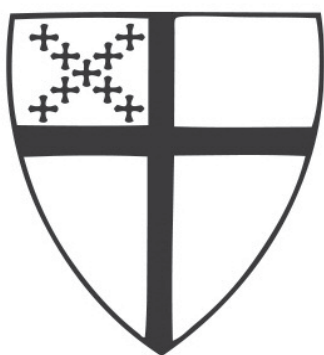
Dr. Hemelt and her colleagues at the Westbank office – OB/GYNs Drs. William von Almen and E. Quinn Peeper – accept most major insurances, including Tricare, and are currently accepting new patients.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the office at **504.367.6971**.

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Parenting: A Blessed Responsibility, Time Investment

By Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Turpin
NAS JRB Chaplain



Chaplain's
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Tuesday-Friday at 11:30 a.m.
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Sunday at 11 a.m.

Last month we looked at marriage being both a blessing and a responsibility. This month we will look at children. My wife and I have five: Grace, Micah, Faith, Daniel and Joy. They are growing up so quickly. Before we know it, they will all be out of the home and on their own. In eighteen short years, I am expected to prepare each of my children for life on their own in what could

be a harsh and dangerous world. How am I doing?

Parents today are increasingly being held responsible for their children's actions. Driving down Belle Chasse Highway, I saw a billboard declare "Be a Parent, not a Buddy." Now, that's harsh. But is it? We in the military get it. You can't supervise, lead, or mentor your best

friend. Mentor and teach your children core values and respect for authority today and they will indeed be your best friend once they are out of the home. Get it backwards by giving your children whatever they want today and they will not respect you once they realize there is more to life than merely getting one's way. The other day I saw a young person utterly disrespect a person in authority, then turn around and complain that the adult was being disrespectful to them by making them do what they did-

n't want to do. Wow!

You teach your kids by your *example*. Give to the poor in our city and your children will develop a giving heart. Teach them that rules don't apply when you disagree and your children will develop an attitude of rebellion toward you some day. Your example is your best teaching tool. They will almost always follow you—for better or for worse.

You teach your kids by your *time*. Play ball or just listen to their concerns and they will take time to listen to you when

you have something important to say. Spend time on your phone and Facebook and they will one day think that their phone and Facebook is more important than you. You only have a few years—make use of all the time you have before you regret it.

If you aren't married or don't have children, these are still good principles in relating to those you are trying to lead or mentor. As always, call if you have questions or want to talk.

Blessings,
Chaps

Louisiana Guard Promotes Two to Brigadier General

By Sgt. Noshoba David
Louisiana National Guard
Public Affairs Office

The Louisiana National Guard (LANG) promoted two officers to the rank of brigadier general during two ceremonies at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans, May 6.

The Louisiana Air National Guard's Pete Schneider of Metairie, La., and Louisiana Army National Guard's Lee Hopkins of St. Francisville, La., were both pinned with the one-star rank by Maj. Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, adjutant general of the LANG and family members.

As the chief of staff for LANG, Schneider is responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating programs, policies and plans for the entire Louisiana Air National Guard.

"This is an honor I've never dreamed of, nor planned on, but I will do the best I can to support the Soldiers and the Airmen," said Schneider. "I'm going to do everything I can to provide what is needed for our wonderful, incredible and amazing organization."

Hopkins is the director of the joint staff and is responsible for directing, supervising, training, coordinating the staff and plans affecting more than 11,500 members of the LANG. He is also designated as the dual status commander.

"I believe that success is based on the people around you and this is a tribute to all the talent in the Louisiana National Guard and what makes



Brig. Gen. Pete Schneider, LANG chief of staff, is pinned with the one-star rank insignia by his wife, Francesca and Maj. Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, the adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard, at Jackson Barracks, New Orleans, May 6.



Brig. Gen. Lee Hopkins, LANG joint staff director, is pinned with the one-star rank insignia by his wife, Lori, while Maj. Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, the adjutant general of the LANG, looks on at Jackson Barracks, New Orleans, May 6.

Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Toby Valadie

us a great organization," said Hopkins. "This was almost by

design because when I'm surrounded by great friends, fam-

ily, leaders and mentors, how could it turn out any other

way? All I had to do was work hard and do the right thing."



MWR Spotlights June 2016

Library Happenings

Summer Reading Program

The program runs June 4 through July 30. There will be weekly performances and crafts activities every Thursday at 2 p.m. Call 504-678-3078 for more information.

Fitness Center

Opening day for Captain's Cup Softball is June 7 at the sports complex. Event start time is 3 p.m. and game start time is 5:30 p.m. Concession stand will be open and adult refreshments will be available. Cash only.

The Quarterly 5K Fun Run & Walk is set for June 23 at 8 a.m. Entry deadline is June 17. Awards presented for each category.

The Fitness Box (Fitbox) located behind the gym is now open Monday through Friday only with limited hours. The Fitbox has barbells, sandbags, kettle bells and more. Call 504-678-3230 for more information on fitness center events.

Painting With the Kids

This event for youth ages 10-17, will be Thursday, June 9 at the Liberty Center. Spots are limited and reservations are required. Cost is \$10 per child. Call 504-678-3034 to make a reservation.

Pool Party Luau

The summer pool party luau will be June 24 from 6-9 p.m. behind the Youth Center. There will be live hula and fire dancers, evening swimming, inflatables, crafts and more. Roasted pig and other themed food will be available for a great price. Call 504-678-3807 for details.

Arts and Crafts

Join in the Father's Day arts and crafts event in front of the NEX on June 11 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Children can color a travel mug just for dad. Call 504-678-3034 for more information.

For all spotlight information visit
www.facebook.com/MWRNOLA



The Currents' staff would like to
thank our sponsors and the Military.

Happy Flag Day! June 14th

From, Sam and Vicki Polo
Jerry Forstater, Norm Umholtz and Ashleigh Vasquez

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